

**NH Department of Safety  
Fire Protection Certification Advisory Committee**

**Meeting Minutes May 4, 2005**

Meeting commenced at 10am and members present were Lawrence Thibodeau, Chris Burns, Butch Burbank, Leonard Daniels, Steve Mango, Thomas Malley and John Mooney.

**Old Business:** Minutes from April 6, 2005 meeting reviewed. Motion to accept Steve Mango and seconded by Chris Burns.

**New Business:** Chris Burns and Steve Mango passed out for review the Meeting Minutes of the **State Advisory Sub-Committee on Fire Alarm and Detection Systems**.

After review the first part of the discussion centered on what defines a 'Qualified Technician'? Lawrence Thibodeau asked if the 4000 hours of field experience is standard in the Alarm and Detection discipline? Butch Burbank followed up with the question that if a technician has 4000 of field experience, would he/she still be required to take classroom courses. Steve Mango replied that the 4000 hours was just a starting point of discussion and that even if a technician had these hours of experience he/she would still have to test out. He continued that the next key is to determine a testing agency.

Thomas Malley interjected that New Hampshire is the first state in the USA to require continuing education for a particular certified discipline. He stated it is progressive and a good idea. Steve Mango added that this would be important because of the rapid change in technologies and codes in each of the disciplines.

Discussion then turned to the required hours for a 'Qualified/Certified System Designer' and Lawrence Thibodeau asked if the 6000 additional hours was too much? Chris Burns did not think so and also added that the majority of plans are designed and submitted by NICET Certified Designers so it may be a moot point.

The remainder of the meeting was focused on enforcement.

Steve Mango began by saying this work we are doing is all well and good but to make everything work, there will be a need for field inspections to be sure the work is being done properly. There needs to be accountability and this could potentially be a problem in rural areas where the Fire Departments are volunteer.

Butch Burbank: Enforcement is not part of our mandate but it does appear to be a necessary piece of the puzzle to make it all work.

Lawrence Thibodeau: It has been his experience that in the past 10 years, municipalities are becoming more aware of NFPA Codes.

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John Mooney: If the ultimate goal of the certification process is to better serve the consumer with Life Safety work being performed by qualified and knowledgeable technicians, what better way is there to protect them by assuring enforcement of the State and Local Fire Codes.

Steve Mango: The best line of defense in enforcing the codes is the issuing or non-issuing of a CO (Certificate of Occupancy).

Thomas Malley: Enforcement is the key to legitimizing this certification process but this will be difficult to achieve because of shrinking state and municipal budgets. He recommended visiting the web site: [www.hadd.com](http://www.hadd.com) which is 'Homeowners against deficient dwellings'.

An outgrowth of shrinking budgets has been a nationwide trend in using third party inspectors.

Chris Burns: His company had work out of state where third party inspectors were involved and he thought one of the possible benefits was their determination to get the work done without any outside interference and their willingness to help and advise.

Butch Burbank: Saw a benefit in using these inspectors because it has been his experience that after speaking with a number of Fire Chiefs in New Hampshire that they are overwhelmed with inspection work and with new construction on the rise, their workloads will only increase.

Thomas Malley: The way the system is set up now, inspectors do not have the time to study updated codes and perform their regular work. He reminded the committee that when we go to the legislature, they would be asking what would third party inspections cost the state? The municipalities? The consumer?

Can we examine existing laws to see if they are being followed? For example....when Public Engineers approve plans and give their final blessing, is there any accountability if the plans were faulty?

Thomas also talked about 'Public Doctrine' which stated that in the past, PE's and inspectors were not to be held liable for faulty design but there is now a nationwide trend going the other way.

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Steve Mango concluded this part of the discussion by stating that we are only an advisory committee but in the end, enforcement will be a key ingredient to the certification process's being a success.

In regards to a 'Qualified/Certified Firm', Lawrence Thibodeau mentioned that the minimum requirements for Liability and E&O seemed high.

Steve Mango: This is a starting point and can be up for discussion at the proper time.

Butch Burbank: Asked what our reply would be if the question is asked why a Qualified/Certified Technician needs to work for a Qualified/Certified Firm?

John Mooney: This is to assure that the technician will be provided with the proper tools and have the minimum insurances. If he/she does have the tools and insurances, in essence he/she is a Qualified Firm. If not, how is the consumer protected if a Qualified Technician performs the work but carries no Liability or E&O insurance?

Lawrence Thibodeau asked if all disciplines have their own 'definitions' or are their commonalities among our fields.

All agreed that about 80% of the definitions are the same and we will cross that bridge together when the time is right.

Lastly, all agreed because vacation schedules we will skip the July meeting and meet in August.

The last subcommittee meeting to be heard from will be **Sprinklers** and Lawrence Thibodeau mentioned that he will be out of town on June 1 but he is available if we want to meet on June 8.

All agreed to the importance to concluding the first round of sub committee meetings so June 8 at 10am will be the next meeting.

Motion to adjourn: John Mooney  
Seconded: Lawrence Thibodeau

**Next Meeting June 8, 2005 10am.**

Respectfully submitted,  
John Mooney